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Trick or treat

MICHELLE ALLENBERG/

POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Hunter Corder, 4, makes ghost cutouts with modelling compound at a Halloween event at the Niagara Safety Village Saturday in Welland. See story page 2.



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UPFRONT

■ **COMMUNITY:** Halloween at Niagara Safety Village

Safe Halloween stressed

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

With Halloween right around the corner Niagara Safety Village in Welland is preparing parents and children for a fun night of trick or treating.

About 100 children and family members attended a Halloween event at the Safety Village Saturday afternoon. Kids of all ages received safety bags and candy.

There were craft activities with carved-out pumpkins and ghosts to decorate. Toys and games were set up for children to participate in and make some new friends.

A favourite for many of the children was the craft table with modelling dough and shapes to make ghosts and other scary creatures.

Niagara Regional Police officers used the event to inform parents and children how to stay safe during Halloween.

Const. Robin Bleich said it's always important to check any treats children get before letting them eat them. Even if you know where the treats came, she said it's good to check it because you never know if the manufacturer missed something.

Bleich also stressed the importance of "stranger danger."

"Power in numbers, that's very important, to stay with the parent's they go out with," she said.

Niagara Safety Village's



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK
Lucas Fortier, 7, dressed as Luigi, and his brother Leon, 5, dressed as an astronaut, play with a train set at a Niagara Safety Village Halloween event Saturday in Welland.

Halloween party is in its eighth year. Executive director Shirley Cordner said the event isn't a fundraiser, but a chance for the community to see what the village is all about.

It also gives people the

opportunity to meet police officers, paramedics and firefighters. Cordner said if they feel comfortable around police officers and firefighters they will be more likely to call for help.

"Most of the children are

under the age of seven. This is a place to bring children that is safe, and they can still get some candy and talk to a police officer to get games and crafts," Cordner said.

Bleich's final advice for having a successful Halloween

was to stay aware, but also to have fun.

"I mean I'm a mom so I get it, Halloween is big for them (children). If they want to wear that Halloween costume for six days after, let them, right? Because they aren't

going to take it off," she said laughing.

Niagara Safety Village collected food donations for the Hope Centre as part of the Halloween party.

michelle.allenberg@sunmedia.ca

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Fortunate Ones
Nov 7

"A rare gem.
Two voices singing as one."
- Alan Doyle, Great Big Sea



FIRST HOT TICKET event in Robertson Theatre:
Daniel Romano
Nov 12

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- Rolling Stone



FIRST HOT TICKET event in Partridge Hall:
Darlene Love
Nov 28

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■ CONSTRUCTION

Wells of Hope volunteers looking for laser level

WAYNE CAMPBELL
Postmedia Network

Hey buddy can you spare a laser level? Wells of Hope volunteers, Ben Obdeyn and Frank Memme, hope an appeal will ease construction chores on two small schools in a pair of poor Guatemalan villages.

The instrument guides builders to straight corners, walls, flooring, and ceilings.

When working on a mountain side, it's a special challenge, said Memme.

"Nothing is level."

The experienced builders volunteered for few weeks to put up the three-to-five room schools.

"We have one laser level but need a second," to work on both schools at the same time, said Obdeyn. "It has to be small enough to put into a suitcase."

The schools are only eight kilometres apart. "But it takes more than an hour to go up, down and around a mountain," said Memme. Two levels would accelerate the projects.

Anyone with a level can call Obdeyn at 905-892-4721.

For Obdeyn, this is his 30th visit to Guatemala. Memme has gone "12 or 13 times."

Niagara-based Wells of Hope primarily drills wells to supply clean water to poor villages in the mountains of Guatemala.

In just over 10 years, the non-profit volunteer agency has built 12 wells and installed piping systems to serve more than 53,000 people around the communities of Jalapa and Jutiapa. The projects replace dirty water drawn from contaminated streams.

The two new schools will bring to 17 Wells of Hope has built for 2,350 students.

While they started out building wells, Obdeyn said, they found other needs to meet. Schools, health centre and other forms of community services such as bridges and cooking stoves became part of the program.

Children, who used to walk for hours to get water from polluted streams, now have time to go to school. But they lacked well-built schools.

Niagara school children have helped by donating backpacks to Wells of Hope



WAYNE CAMPBELL/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Frank Memme, left, and Ben Obdeyn practise for a Wells of Hope school construction project in Guatemala. They are asking for donation of a small laser level.

filled with supplies for Guatemala students and by collecting coins to build schools.

Wells of Hope maintains a camp for volunteers who pay their way from Canada to help for two weeks. They work on projects such as drilling, building schools, roads and bridges or providing dental and other health care.

Obdeyn received more than 2,000 tools in scores of tool boxes drawn from basements, garages and sheds across the region.

Last year, he asked Niagara residents for help since Guatemalan farmers had little except homemade hoes. They needed hammers and saws in particular. Obdeyn received more than 2,000 tools in scores of tool boxes drawn from basements, garages and sheds across the region.

For more information about Wells of Hope, its projects and funding needs see www.wellofhope.com



Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc. Proudly Supporting Breast Cancer Awareness Month



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Capping the costs for an affordable community centre

DAVE AUGUSTYN
 For Postmedia Network

At the end of July, I wrote here about how Council changed gears in the design of a more affordable Multi-Faceted Community Centre (MFCC). Council considered the matter again last week and approved hiring a construction manager and capping the operating and capital costs.

You will recall that, based on a detailed business case analysis in 2013/14, the town confirmed that "sustaining demand" for a MFCC (single-pad arena, a fitness centre, walking / running indoor track, 2,000 square-foot multi-purpose space, and double gymnasium) existed.

So, Council appointed a citizen/user-based Architectural Design Advisory Committee (ADAC) in August 2014 to help design that type

of facility. In February 2015, Council agreed with ADAC's recommendations of adding a large multi-purpose / performing arts space (+6,000 square feet), an atrium/shared public space (+9,600 square feet), and +1,200 spectator/arena seats.

Council also agreed with ADAC's later recommendations to do two things. One, re-evaluate the business case for building a twin-pad arena during the initial build (instead of after 2023). Two, tender the operation of the potential centre to the private sector.

Concerned with the project's affordability in June, however, Council directed staff to determine potential capital and operating costs of this expanded design.

In early July, Council agreed with a Leisureplan recommendation that, because "a second ice pad would be utilized 68% 77% during prime time," the Town should provide a second

ice pad by 2018/19.

In late-July, Council learned that no private firms wanted to operate the Centre; that a "Class-D" estimate pegged the expanded design at \$54 million; and that a pro forma estimated operating costs of that design at +\$500,000 per year.

Clearly the design ballooned above the initial operating and capital business case and had to be rationalized and reduced.

So, Council directed staff to refine the pro forma's operating costs, to start develop a realistic fundraising plan, and to recommend a construction manager who would help make the design more affordable to build and operate.

When these matters arose on Oct. 19, we took action. First, Council approved hiring Ball Construction as a construction manager to help the architect and staff to find cost efficien-

cies and assist in reducing the facility's overall capital and operating costs. Second, Priorities Committee placed a \$30-million capital cap and a \$200,000 operating-subsidy cap on the project's design.

When we sell excess property, raise community funds, or receive government grants, those funds will make these capital costs even more affordable. Third, we directed staff to circulate this information to ADAC members.

Staff suggested that we might see the next major re-design in early 2016.

I will continue to keep you informed about progress of the potential multi-purpose community centre.

Check out links for documents and past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com. You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca with questions or to suggest future topics.



Mirenchu is pictured in Montreal in September 1971 in this photo by Rene Beauchamp.

HANDOUT/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Shipwrecks – Mirenchu

SKIP GILLHAM
 For Postmedia Network

The Spanish built cargo ship *Mirenchu* was only two years old when it first came to the Great Lakes in 1970.

The 117.96-metre-long, 4,258 gross tonne freighter was sold in 1972 and was back through the St. Lawrence Seaway again that year as *Sierra Jara*.

Resold in 1980, the ship was sailing as *Acmi* when it ran aground on the Berberie River in Guyana on June 28, 1981. The vessel was refloated, taken to San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, birthplace of a number of former Toronto Blue Jays, and laid up.

Despite being declared a total loss, the ship was repaired and returned to service as *Altair I* in 1983, became *Galazito Kyma* in 1990 and *Antares* in 1992. The latter was disabled in the Gulf of Mexico on Dec. 23, 1993, and abandoned by the crew in leaking condition. A salvage crew managed to get the ship to Mobile, Ala., where pumps were constantly operated to keep the vessel afloat.

This time it was not repaired and, on Sept. 26, 1995, *Antares* was towed out to sea and scuttled, as an artificial reef, about 25 kilometres south of Pensacola, Fla.

ONLINE



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Kick back with this easy drinking Chardonnay

One can be forgiven for visiting Flat Rock Cellars in the Jordan area simply for the view.

Perched atop the escarpment the winery has a picturesque view of the vineyards stretching to Lake Ontario and beyond, but also the home of some very fine, quality wines that president Ed Madronich sees as ready for the global market.

From the outset, Flat Rock has chosen to focus on just a few varieties, ones that grow well in this region.

"From a production perspective, we do every little thing for every grape, every bunch, every berry as well as we possibly can," said Madronich.

"So we know we're making really good wines."

Their strategy continues to be just as a great Ontario winery, but to be a great winery

period.

"That means I want to over deliver what's inside the bottle at the price point that we offer it," he added.

"And that means better than what Chile, Australia or France are doing."

"When someone here in Ontario is looking to buy a bottle of wine, they're confident that we're competitive to anywhere else in the world."

Madronich said that historically, Ontario was only known for making cheap wines and has only begun to make higher priced, high quality wine for the last 15 to 20 years.

And while Canadian icewines have made a significant impact around the world, the other varieties still have a ways to go to find their category and shelf space.

"We have the best soils," said Madronich. He compared the

temperature and soils as comparable to the wine regions in France.

"When you look at what the price of wine is for what the quality wines is, we're a great value."

Madronich said that if he were to take his winery and move it to Oregon, the price of the wines would automatically double overnight.

"Right now, people aren't paying for it, not because the quality is not there, it's not in our mind set," he said.

Winemakers will taste this wine, and say you have to charge more for your wines, because your making us look bad by comparison.

To prove his point Madronich brought out his Good Kharma Chardonnay from 2013.

"It's an awesome wine. Hand picked, hand sorted, gravity feed, french oak barrel aged, it super

over delivers," he bubbled.

"Good Kharma, we make every drop at the exact same way, which is as best as we can, at the end of the day we divide on style not on quality," said Madronich.

"That and our estate Pinot are hands and away our best value wines."

This is any easy wine to review and describe.

While some wines and descriptions leave you hunting, this wine is very up front. As a Chardonnay, it is a little more fruity with less oak.

Wonderful on the nose with hints of fresh apple.

As you take your first sip, the creamy texture envelops your tongue and then follows up with citrus acidity, particularly lime on the finish.

Delicious, well balanced, and a very

gentle flavour of oak, this wine will win over many fans.

It's priced at \$16.95, which in my opinion is a great value. To top it off, a portion of the sales of the wine goes to the Ontario Association of Food Banks.

"There's a lot of people in this province that don't have access to that (healthy food). This to me is a way people can give to a food bank on an everyday basis," added Madronich.

"We want to be part of the solution that everyone has a full stomach."

Good Kharma indeed. The wine is available at the winery and LCBO locations.

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@bbtym



BOB LYNCZYZYN/
POSTMEDIA
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Maria Lucarelli

Maria is a partner at Lancaster, Brooks & Welch and a member of the family law team. Maria's legal focus is in the areas of matrimonial law, including pre-nuptials, separation, divorce and child custody matters. Concern for her clients' wellbeing is evident to all who deal with her.



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CRIME

Man shot with police in Pelham upgraded to serious condition

GREG FURNINGER

Pelham News

A man who was shot along with two Niagara Regional Police officers earlier this month at a Fenwick apartment building is in improving condition at hospital.

Monica Hudan, a spokeswoman for the province's Special Investigations Unit, said Thursday the man was in serious condition.

He had been listed for several days as being critical.

Although the SIU and police have not named the man, he has been identified as 28-year-old Corey Richardson.

Two officers who were also shot on the top floor of the Canboro Gardens apartment complex on the night of Oct. 10 have not yet returned to work. Const.

Neal Ridley, an eight-year member of the force, and Const. Jake Braun, a five-year member, are both still recuperating at home. Const. Phil Gavin said.

One officer was shot in the shoulder and two other places, the other was shot in the foot. Police have not indicated which officer sustained what injuries.

Police responded to a report of an armed suicidal man at 704 Canboro Rd. just past 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 10.

Police have previously reported that a man left his apartment and began shooting at police. As of Thursday, no charges have been laid as investigations are ongoing.

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Twitter: @GregJTheB

ZERO INCREASE

Police draw line on budget

DON FRASER

Postmedia Network

The Niagara Regional police services board has approved its first zero-increase operating budget in recent memory.

The \$133.6-million operating budget was passed last Thursday, and will be forwarded to Niagara regional council for final approval.

In July, the NRP's board asked the service to prepare an operating budget with no increase in order to meet a Niagara Region target.

"The service responded to budget pressures, and subject to identified unresolved factors... was able to meet the budget guidance," said a staff report prepared by police services finance manager Laun Bullock.

"I'd like to publicly thank the chief and staff," said board member David Barrick. "They've done a tremendous job at zero per cent."

My understanding is in recent memory, it has never occurred (for) the service board, certainly in the last 10 years, I think the average has been about four per cent, year over year."

"There was a tremendous amount of work and effort... it sends a strong message," he said. "It gives the police service and board, I believe, a lot of credibility when we go to the Region (Nov. 5) and it considers their budget and our budget as well."

Barrick called it a "responsible budget" that maintains current service levels.

Board chairman Bob Gale expressed his "compliments, too."

"Like member Barrick (said), nobody can ever remember it coming in on a zero budget."

Some "significant risks" to the budget remain outstanding, according to the staff report received at the meeting. They include the impact of unsettled collective agree-

ments.

Personnel salaries, benefits and other allowances make up 99% of the total operating budget.

A provincial grants program is also being consolidated with no information yet available on how that reform could affect the budget.

Along the spending reductions was a staff compensation cut of \$700,000, with other decreases including fuel price savings, discretionary spending, and program changes.

Meanwhile, the report says new deployment strategies and efficiencies began in 2012 in anticipation of moving into new police facilities. The new 207,000-square-foot headquarters in Niagara Falls is under construction but is expected to be complete by the end of the year, according to the NRP website.

The zero increase was "achieved through the realization of new headquarters savings, a pre-budget program review exercise, continued rationalizing and reducing of discretionary spending and re-prioritizing resources," the report added.

Of total staff or "service authorized strength," the 2015 budget had 706 uniformed and 312 civilian staff for a total of 1,018.

Those numbers, as part of the 2016 budget, are 698 uniform staff and 304 civilians for a total of 1,002.

In addition to the police services budget, the police board budget came in at \$724,250.

The service's proposed capital budget of \$2.7 million was also approved, with vice-chair Andy Petrovski voting against it, citing a number of capital expenditure concerns.

The capital budget is financed through police service reserves.

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Thursday, November 5	10:00-11:00 am

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- Learn more about municipal drains & how they may impact your property.
- Get facts about relevant drainage legislation & talk to Pelham's Drainage Superintendent.

For more information, please contact 905-892-2607 ext. 323.



CHRISTMAS IN PELHAM
November 4, 2015 – January 3, 2016



Get ready for the holidays. Check out these great upcoming events around Town and watch for more next week!

November 4 (6pm to 9pm): Holiday Gift Showcase and Downtown Stroll - Downtown Fonthill

November 5 (10am to 9pm), November 6 (10am to 8pm), November 7 (10am to 5pm): Holiday Gift Showcase - Shoppes of Ridgville

LOCAL NEWS

■ **CRIME:** Crooks create a sense of panic

Caller ID defeated by new trick: spoofing

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

Thieves and fraudsters are using a trick called spoofing that allows them to defeat the caller ID feature on a telephone.

"You can spoof a phone number so that it makes it look like *the (Tribune)* is calling or the Niagara Regional Police Service is calling. The number will pop up, but you don't really know who is calling," NRP Det. Sgt. Paul Spiridi, head of the central fraud unit, said.

"There are a number of apps out there that will allow you to hide and mask your own number that is calling. We are seeing a combination of things. There are ones where the person's own number pops up, and they are also able to grab another number that is similar to the area, and that's because a lot of people will not pick up out-of-province calls or 1-800 numbers that are coming in because they don't want to deal with telemarketers."

These types of calls are catching some people off guard because they actually think the police, Revenue Canada, their bank or credit card company is making the call.

"It's a way for them to get you to pick up the phone and then deal with whatever type of scam they are running," Spiridi said. "It gives it that air of legitimacy. It's the



MIKE DIBATTISTA / NIAGARA FALLS REVIEW

Caller ID feature on your phone can be defeated by crooks. It's called spoofing and it's a way to disguise who is making the phone call.

same thing when they spoof an e-mail address that might say Niagara Regional Police or CRA."

E-mail spoofing is more commonly known as phishing. It is often used by dishonest advertisers, and sometimes thieves, to falsify the "from" entry on an e-mail to try and trick victims that the message is coming from a friend,

bank or some other legitimate source.

"You just can't rely on an e-mail or a phone number that is coming in to you, because if I'm trying to rip you off I will lie to you and give you a bogus number to call," said Spiridi, who has been working the fraud beat for about nine years.

His advice is to never give

out personal information to someone you don't know on the other end of the phone.

Spiridi said it's best to take the caller's information down and to call them back later. "That will give you time to confirm if that name and phone number are actually from your bank or credit card company by comparing them with what is on their website or on one

of your invoices.

"We get phone calls from other police agencies all the time. If I haven't dealt with the time. If I haven't dealt with that person before and I don't know the voice, then I will ask for a name and number and I will call them back," said Spiridi. "It's unfortunate that you have to be untrusting, but now there are so many scams out there it has come to that

point."

Police say crooks are trying to create a sense of panic when they call someone and the display name or phone number appears to be coming from the police, Revenue Canada or your credit card company.

"These guys are very good at what they do," Spiridi said. "They might say that you owe money or that you are going to be arrested, or that your accounts have been compromised and they need to confirm some information. You are not expecting a fraud when you see the call display and they get your guard down."

Once crooks obtain your personal information, police say they are quick to get online and make purchases.

"This is organized crime and they are very good at what they do," said Spiridi.

Don't call the police bank and blast them for bothering you because they might not be the person who made the call, he said.

Companies work to put a security feature in place and there are people out there who are trying to find ways to beat it, Spiridi said.

"Some people will get these types of calls and hang up because they know they are not true, but they are preying on the ones they can catch off guard."

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **NIAGARA COLLEGE:** Studying nursing now at Welland campus

Kenyan student has memories of terror attack

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

With about 1,000 new international students from 90 countries, Niagara College has much of the world map covered.

But Ruth Ndumia, 33, is one of two only Kenyan students attending Niagara this year.

Ndumia has been a nurse in Kenya for 10 years. In the terrorist attack at the Westgate shopping mall in Kenya in 2013 that left 67 people dead, Ndumia was one of the nurses helping on scene.

After the attack, victims were sent to the nearest hospitals and Ndumia went with other nurses to help the hospitals cope with the volume of patients.

The attack "was the most horrible thing I've ever seen," she said.

Ndumia lived in Nairobi, Kenya her whole life before coming to Canada.

For many students, the decision to attend post-secondary school is theirs alone. But for Ndumia, it was a group choice.

She works at the Karen Hospital in Nairobi and was selected by the hospital to apply to attend post-secondary school overseas.

"We wanted to upgrade our standard for patient care in

the critical care unit and cardiac department," Ndumia said.

She was accepted to the one-year post-graduate certificate in RN — Critical Care Nursing program offered at the Welland campus.

"I already know what we have back home, so now I'm learning how to improve," she said.

Ndumia has been in Canada since Aug. 22 and wants to see what the hospitals here are like. She said she is also very interested in health-care policies.

Ndumia compared the teaching styles of Kenya and Canada and said they are very different. In Canada, she said, it's student-based and it is more hands-on. In Kenya, her studies seemed to be more theory based.

It is her first time in North America, and she is "very excited" to be at Niagara College.

When Ndumia was considering schools, she had to choose between Canada and Australia. She chose Canada because the paperwork was more straightforward and regulations were easier to understand.

Part of what makes Niagara College and Canada appealing, she said, is the support

from the school's international department. Director Sean Coote said staff assist new students any way it can.

"We help them from the application process, up until they get on the plane. From the time they land in Toronto — we offer a pickup service," he said.

The department connects new students with other international students so they can become more settled. Ndumia said she hasn't taken advantage of this yet, but she will now that she knows there's another Kenyan student.

"We pride ourselves on preparing students to be global-ready. The idea that our kind of global economy is ever changing, to be able to have students who can work cross-culturally, who understand

different cultures ... when exposed to that classroom ... allows all of our students to graduate with more global skills," Coote said.

Coote said a few days before Orientation Week, the school has a separate orientation for international students.

Ndumia didn't attend that, but did go to Orientation Week. She said that is where she has made friends.

Another benefit of having international students is economic development in Niagara.

Coote said many students will start businesses after they graduate.

Ndumia wants to gain Canadian experience once she graduates and plans to apply for a one-year work visa.



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK
Ruth Ndumia, 33, stands in front of the Canadian flag at her rented house in Welland.

"I want to get the experience to see how what we learned gets put into practice,"

she said.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **FUNDRAISER:** Red Bull event to benefit spinal-cord research

Wings for Life run coming back

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

Niagara Falls will again represent Canada when the 2016 Red Bull Wings for Life World Run returns to the Horseshoe Capital in May.

Earlier this year, more than 700 runners took off from Kingsbridge Park at the same time as more than 100,000 participants from around the world for the same cause: To raise more than \$5.5 million for spinal-cord research.

On May 8, Niagara Falls will host one of 35 runs across six continents in the simultaneous event, which will be broadcast live.

Registration is now open at www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com, with 100 per cent of entry fees going directly towards spinal-cord research.

Unlike a traditional race, there is no static finish line. Competitors run in front of an advancing "catcher car," with each car around the world governed by a single, global race schedule. A half-hour after the runners start, the pace car at every race location begins on the track.

Once a car overtakes a runner, their race is over. This continues until there is only one male and one female in the world left running.

Only they will be crowned the Wings for Life World Run champions, meaning runners not only compete head to head with those in their country, but also around the world.

Blaine Penny, of Calgary, won the Niagara Falls event last year with a total distance of 65 kilometres, which also made him the last male running in any of the three North American events.

Canadian Olympic cyclist Lyne Bessette, of Quebec, won the women's category with a run of 47 km.

At the global level, Lemawork Ketema, of Ethiopia, was the last male running in the world for the second year in a row with a distance of 79.9 km.

It's estimated that three million people are living with a spinal-cord injury around the world. Every year, 130,000

2015 STATS

Global runners: 101,280

Niagara Falls runners: 750

Global kilometres run: 1,059,529

Global money raised: \$5.5M

more sustain a spinal-cord injury, followed by paralysis — the main cause being traffic accidents.

In Canada, there are more than 85,000 people living with spinal-cord injury, with 51 per cent as a result of traumatic injury. Each year, it's estimated, there are 4,300 new cases across the country.

Organizers said they were looking for an "iconically Canadian" destination to host the run, and Niagara Falls fit the bill.

They said Niagara Falls also has the "perfect layout" for the run, which is a 100-km stretch, which is flat or with an equivalent elevation.

Organizers said they're expecting between 1,000 and 1,500 runners in Niagara in May, adding they were fielding questions throughout the summer wondering if the run would return.

Niagara Falls Tourism chairman Wayne Thomson said just like it was earlier this year, the 2016 run should be "pretty spectacular."

"This year we had more than 700 runners with their friends and their families coming to Niagara Falls and being the only stop in Canada, the massive publicity that we get from that is huge," he said.

"That's what it's all about — getting as many events and happening as you can. Here at Niagara Falls Tourism, we'll get it on our website and promote it and market it. We're looking forward to it."

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LOCAL NEWS

ENTERTAINMENT

Monsters of Schlock invade TV

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

They've endured every kind of horror they can inflict on each other, but are the Canadian mad men of Monsters of Schlock ready for a prime time series?

As always, they'll give it a shot. Painfully.

The crazed performance art duo of Sweet Pepper Klopek of Niagara Falls and on-stage partner Burnaby Q, Orbach of Guelph have filmed a pilot, and are trying to crowd fund \$25,000 on Kickstarter to film the rest of a six-episode series they describe as *Super Dave Osborne meets Flight of the Conchords*.

Despite their reputation

for mind-boggling, gross out antics, they insist this won't be another *Jackass*.

"When people hear we're doing a TV show, that's usually what they think," said Klopek, former singer for Niagara band The Legendary Klopeks. "Some sort of cross between *Jackass* and *America's Funniest Home Videos*. What we're actually doing is totally different."

The show aims to be a sitcom based on their "hilariously ridiculous lives," written and directed by Brett Nikita. The story follows Orbach trying to expose his successful former partner as a hack magician doing lazy tricks.

Meanwhile, Klopek is

breathing through life with an open mind and open heart, exploring a lifelong fascination with cryptozoology.

Klopek said fans can help fund the shows in different ways on Kickstarter — \$100 gets you to a red carpet screening of the entire season in Niagara Falls, while \$5,000 gets your own personal performance. For \$40, you'll get the entire series on DVD when it's released.

For Klopek, the rigours of a TV show will seem calm after an intense decade on the road, setting six Guinness World Records along the way. They perform about 200 live shows per year in bars and col-

lege campuses across the country, though they were banned in licensed venues in Alberta in 2008.

"For the last 10 years we've been touring the world with our very physically intense stunt show," Klopek said. "We're actually kind of looking forward to being in one place for a while."

"The older we get, the longer it takes to heal. Shockingly, we're holding up pretty well."

The duo appears on the taping of *Live on Queen* with David Green at Taps Brewery in Niagara Falls. The episode went online Oct. 12.

john.law@sunmedia.ca



SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Sweet Pepper Klopek, left, and Burnaby Q, Orbach are bringing *Monsters of Schlock* to TV. The duo have started a Kickstarter campaign to film a six-episode series, after a notorious decade on the road.

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■ **NIAGARA COLLEGE:** Faceless dolls represent murdered, missing aboriginal women

'We've had so many fallen sisters'

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Each piece of felt is cut with intention.
Each strand of hair is meticulously placed.
Alkie-Babe Froman takes great care as she assembles the doll, knowing the harsh story it tells and the important message it's intended to deliver.

Where the face should be, a blank space remains.
It acts as a reminder that the woman behind the doll has been forgotten by society.

Dozens of faceless dolls were created at Niagara College's Niagara-on-the-Lake campus during a recent workshop hosted by Froman to honour the memory of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

The 24-year-old general business student plans to keep the initiative going until 1,200 dolls are made, each representing a forgotten face.

It's a cause Froman, originally from Six Nations reserve and now living in Welland, holds close to her heart.

"It touches every close to home, as I am First Nations," she said, while breaking momentum from urging passersby to get involved in the workshop and become informed.

"We've had so many fallen sisters, aunts, daughters, grandmothers. Their lives matter, too."

Froman's birth mother, Kim Yake, came dangerously close to being added to that gut-wrenching list.

Having fallen to a life of prostitution in B.C., she had joined several women on an outing to the home of now infamous serial killer Robert Pickton. After an unsettling feeling around the leery of her surroundings, she left her friends behind and hitchhiked back to town, Froman said.

"She never saw those girls again. Their deaths and their missing status was never reported."

How easily those women were forgotten long haunted Yake, who turned her life around and later worked to educate youths about the dangers of drugs and prostitution. She died in 2013.

Froman, who considers her mother a "huge role model" in her life, wants to take the harsh reality her mother experienced and shine a spotlight on it through the initiative.

"I just want to make sure people realize that all lives matter," she said.

She hoped the jarring appearance of the faceless dolls would work to catch the attention of people at the college. "I want to create that awareness. People just don't know," she said.

"The amount of missing and murdered aboriginal women is so astounding compared to non-native women," Froman said, adding "higher authorities just don't seem to care about First Nations women."

"It would be a horrific thing if my son woke up one day and just didn't know where I was and nobody bothered looking for me," she said.

"It would be a horrible thing for him to go through. I've witnessed it in so many other families, as well as my own. It's so hard to see that type of fear implemented in somebody's eyes."

It's a shock to those within the First Nations community

"when one of our loved ones goes missing and nobody else cares," Froman said, adding she believes more people would care if they were properly informed.

Additional faceless dolls workshops will be held on the 1,200-doll mark is met.

They will be put on display at the Niagara College Welland campus and later sent to Ottawa, where they will be featured at the Native Women Association of Canada headquarters.

Froman hopes those who see the dolls will walk away with a

sense of empathy.

"I hope people start to recognize the importance of these issues," she said.

It begins with awareness, she said, and leads to change.

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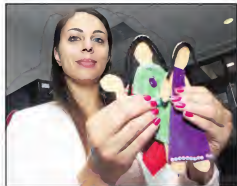
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MARYANNE FIRTH/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara College student Alkie-Babe Froman is leading an initiative through which faceless dolls are being created to honour the memory of missing and murdered aboriginal women of Canada. Froman is pictured on Oct. 9 in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

■ **LIGHT OF DAY NIAGARA:** Meridian Centre show Nov. 6

After 30 years, Blue Rodeo still brings it

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

When a band hits the 30-year mark, they're pretty much dead it all.

Bazil Donovan certainly has. Blue Rodeo's original headliners has been there since Day 1, alongside co-founders Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor, and not much escapes his attention.

He has seen the crowds go from newly college kids to families with lawn chairs. He has watched concerts go from high energy rave-ups to more mellow affairs. And he's read those comments about Blue Rodeo's first five records being the only ones that matter.

That last one makes Donovan chuckle. As a music huff, he gets it.

"I'm guilty of it myself with some of my favourite artists," he says. "Do I really need the new Rolling Stones record? I think their best work is probably already out there. But then again, Bob Dylan still makes (great) records. Every now and then he comes out with a record where I go 'This is a really good record, and he's seventy-something'."

"I mean, you try and just go past that. Whatever happens happens. Some people, after they've made 10 of them, they make great records. I figure if they're that bad, people won't buy them."

The rest of Blue Rodeo gets it as well. In 2012, the band's illustrious first five albums (*Outskirts*, *Diamond Mine*, *Casino*,

Lost Together and *Five Days in July*) were remastered and re-released by Warner Music in a boxed set. But skipping their work since would deny you the spacey rock of *Nowhere to Here* (1995), the hack-to-basics songcraft of *Are You Ready* (2005) and the scattered greatness of 2009's double-disc *The Things We Left Behind*.

"Usually after we make a record, we can tell the level for excitement we have for it," says Donovan. "There's the odd time when, I have to be honest, I kind of went 'I don't think this is our best record.' I won't say that out loud because some other people worked really hard on it... but time usually tells."

"We still go at it with the same intensity we always did, but I

guess there's not as much on the line any more. Back when we were making the first five records, we were trying to break it in the States still. We were concerned about all these things that we're just not concerned about now."

"Now we're just concerned about 'Do we like it? We live with it, and that's basically what counts'."

Headlining this year's Light of Day Niagara fundraiser for Parkinson's research, being held for the first time at Meridian Centre in St. Catharines Nov. 6, Blue Rodeo is like comfort food at this point. Few Canadian bands have been more enshrined, awarded and decorated. They have nothing left to prove, but are driven by a songwriting duo who refuse

to let the brand grow stale.

Donovan has watched Cuddy and Keelor make classics since they were all 20-somethings in Toronto during the '80s. They've all done solo projects, but something about the Blue Rodeo umbrella still pushes and prods them.

"They write separately, but they're still just as competitive as they ever were," he says. "That's just the way they are. If Greg knows that Jim has a hatch of great tunes, it just makes him want to write more."

"Greg is the one who likes to get more adventurous. He's always trying to take us somewhere we haven't been before. We're recording some stuff lately, and Jim and I are looking at each other going, 'We've

WHO: Blue Rodeo, Joe Grushecky, Eddie Manion, Bob D'Urso, Jason Heath, Bobby Mahoney, Miss Emily, Rob Esler & Gord Sinclair
WHAT: Light of Day Niagara
WHERE: Meridian Centre, 1 IceDogs Way, St. Catharines
WHEN: Nov. 6, 7 p.m.
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never done anything like this before. If we put this on a record people aren't going to know what to make of it.' By the time it gets out, probably something will change. But we still have to push the envelope a bit, just for us."

Sometimes the envelope pushes back. Being around 30 years has led to some handshakes, including the death of former keyboardist James Gray in 2013, and Keelor's battle with diabetes.



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■ RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS DAY



KARENA WALTER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Jeff Sinclair and Lesley Calvin of Niagara College and Kristen Smith of Brock University join Mayor Walter Sendzik recently at city hall for the launch of Random Act of Kindness 2015 which takes place Nov. 6. The Niagara Community Foundation event encourages residents to make someone's day with kind acts and show how generous the community can be.

Niagarans asked to pay it forward Nov. 6

KARENA WALTER
Postmedia Network

Students will rake leaves for unsuspecting seniors. Staff will hand out healthy snacks on campus. And positive, unexpected messages in chalk will dot Brock University's grounds.

It's all part of Random Act of Kindness Day Nov. 6, when Niagara celebrates being kind to others.

The university and Niagara College will participate in the annual event along with schools, organizations and individuals across the region.

"It's a good opportunity to celebrate a sense of community in Niagara and on campus," said Kristen Smith, Brock University manager of student and community outreach.

It's the sixth year the Niagara Community Foundation has held the initiative.

JeAnne Krick, the foundation's community initiatives manager, said participation has grown since the first year and they've been getting calls from individuals and groups who want to get involved.

"The momentum builds every year. So many groups are doing amazing things in their neighbourhoods," she said.

In the past, a day-care centre made art for seniors homes and an elementary school created a "kindness quilt" asking students to write something nice about each of their classmates. The YMCA handed out

hot chocolate on a cold morning and individuals bought strangers coffee in drive-thru lines.

"Niagara is always a very kind community. Random Act of Kindness Day is a way to celebrate kindness," she said.

The foundation provides cards for participants to give to recipients when they commit a random act of kindness, asking them to pay it forward.

While there's no way to measure how many people participate in the initiative because one card can pass through multiple hands, the foundation prints 70,000 of them.

Residents are asked to share their acts of kindness on Facebook or Twitter on Nov. 6 with the hashtag #RAKDayNiagara.

"Kindness is contagious," Krick said.

"It's such a good feeling. It doesn't have to cost a thing. It helps us build community."

Niagara College community engagement co-ordinator Jeff Sinclair said teams of students at each campus will be planning Random Act of Kindness Day activities.

"We try to get people to do things that are free, because it doesn't cost money to do kind things," he said.

Last year, for instance, the college's international students posted kind thoughts in their native languages on campus. Sinclair said that created an opportunity for students to engage with each other.

PAY IT FORWARD

What: Random Act of Kindness Day

When: Friday, Nov. 6, all day

Where: Everywhere in Niagara

How to get involved: Do something nice for someone. Give them an RAK card, available free from any

Meridian Credit Union branch

More information: www.niagaracommunityfoundation.org/rak

Twitter: #rakdayniagara

He said the college wants students to pay it forward, and he expects more students to participate than last year.

"We feel very strongly it's important to do," he said.

Smith, from Brock, said the school will take students to senior homes but they know some students will have their own ideas for acts of kindness.

"We get the ball rolling and encourage students to get out on their own. We know students do several acts of kindness and we love hearing about them, too," Smith said.

"It makes for a special atmosphere on campus."

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Kenny Rogers starts saying goodbye

JOHN LAW

Postmedia Network

The Gambler isn't bluffing: One last world tour, and he's done.

No more tours. No more albums. No more show business. For country icon Kenny Rogers, it's time to walk away. As he announced on *The Today Show* last month, his 57-year career comes to an end after a retirement tour in early 2016.

Which likely means his four-night string of Christmas concerts at Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort Nov. 11 to 14 is the last chance for local fans to catch him.

As Rogers stresses over the phone from a bus heading to "I don't know," this won't be a fake farewell tour — when it's finished, so is he.

"In four years I'll be 81 years old, and I don't like the chances of touring (again)," he says. "You know, it's a chance to end of retire with dignity."

But there's another big reason: His two 11-year-old twin sons with fifth wife Wanda Rogers is no longer willing to put career over family.

"In my autobiography I wrote, sometimes there's a fine line between being driven and being selfish. When I was younger I was selfish, and I chose success over my family. I think I paid a price for that, and I'm determined not to do that (again). I have a bucket list for my boys, and I want to make sure I get it done."

There's certainly nothing left to prove for the Houston-born legend. He topped the country and pop charts with regularity in the '70s and '80s, selling more than 165 million albums. He was finally inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2013 ("I told my boys, it's not when you get in ... it's that you get in").

With a legacy few country singers can match, Rogers realized he's just "pounding the pavement" prolonging it now.

"I swore I wouldn't do that," he says. "And my mobility is really bothering me. I've found some great humour now that my body's gone, but it's just not as much fun when you can't do your best. When

WHO: Kenny Rogers

WHAT: Christmas & Hits Tour

WHERE: Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort

WHEN: Nov. 11 & 12 at 8:30 p.m.; Nov. 13 & 14 at 9 p.m.

TICKETS: Start at \$35
www.ticketmaster.ca

you can't do things you feel you really want to do."

Now that it's wrapping up, Rogers' incredible career deserves a re-evaluation. After starting with a rockabilly group in the '50s and finding his first success with '60s rock group The First Edition, Rogers went solo in 1976 and scored his first huge hit, *Lucille*, the next year.

It opened the floodgates. Between 1976 and 1981, Rogers swarmed record with hits like *The Gambler*, *Coward of the County*, *You Decorated My Life*, *Don't Fall in Love With a Dreamer* and *Love the World Away*. He topped the pop charts with *Lady*, written by Lionel Richie, then scored his

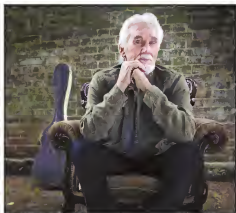
biggest hit ever in 1983 with the Dolly Parton duet *Islands In the Stream*, penned by Barry Gibb.

Along the way there were movies (*Six Pack*), TV specials, and continuous world tours even as Rogers' physical condition worsened. When he performed at Oakes Garden Theatre in Niagara Falls in 2003, many fans were surprised by his pronounced limp.

But then, as now, Rogers' wit was still sharp. His retirement tour could be as much joking as singing.

"I'm still planning the show, and I'd really like to do something totally different," he says. "I'd almost like to come out and sit down on the stage and talk about my career from start to finish, but I don't know how exciting that would be. It'd be fun for me!"

"My life is a series of stories, and I'll say this: My humour has gotten better the worse my health gets. I've found some great jokes about being old. There are a lot of people who come to the show because someone talks them



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Kenny Rogers begins his retirement tour in early 2016. But before that, his annual Christmas tour hits the Niagara Fallsview Casino Nov. 11 to 14. It will likely be his final shows ever in Niagara Falls.

into it, and they don't really care about my music. I feel like if I can make them laugh, they'll have had a good time. That is my challenge."

But before he starts saying goodbye, Rogers has his annual Christmas tour — a tradition for 34 straight years. It's accompanied by his sixth holiday-themed album, *Once Again It's Christmas*, which

has him partnering with Allison Krauss, Jennifer Nettles and a cappella group Home Free.

"I found some songs that I'd never done before," he says. "There were certain people I wanted to record with, and it was important for me to do it."

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2015 Fall Green Scene

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